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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 23 May 1991, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. DJOUDI (Algeria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (continued)

Emergency assistance for the economic and social rehabilitation of Liberia (continued)

The PRESIDENT recalled that, at the 5th meeting of the current session, the Council had heard an oral report from the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship on emergency assistance for the economic and social rehabilitation of Liberia.

Since no proposal on that question had been submitted, he would take it that the Council wished to take note of the oral report on emergency assistance for the economic and social rehabilitation of Liberia.

It was so decided.

Enlargement of the composition of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (continued)

Draft resolution E/1991/L.18

The PRESIDENT said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Council wished to adopt draft resolution E/1991/L.18, entitled "Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees".

It was so decided.

UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY (E/1991/15)

Mr. de SOUZA (Rector of the United Nations University) said that the annual report of the Council of the United Nations University (UNU) for 1990 (E/1991/15) was a self-contained and self-explanatory document. Accordingly, instead of commenting on it, he believed that it would be more useful to share with Economic and Social Council members some of the thinking that had emerged in the United Nations University on the institutional development and programme strategies of that institution. In particular, he would like to

(Mr. de Souza)

highlight the way in which the various components of the University's institutional growth were beginning to coalesce, bringing UNU closer to what its founders had mentioned in the University's Charter, namely, "an international community of scholars".

The strategy for the University's programmatic growth were set out comprehensively in the second medium-term perspective for 1991-1995, approved by the University Council in December 1988, which he had presented earlier to the Economic and Social Council and to the Second Committee of the General Assembly. Consequently, instead of taking up the question of the second medium-term perspective again, it would be more useful to concentrate on the University's institutional development strategy. Institutional development was demonstrated by the increase in the number of research and training centres and programmes. That increase in centres and programmes might be regarded as a barometer of the confidence that many Governments had in the University's ability to make a significant contribution to the attainment of the goals of the United Nations Charter.

In the UNU Charter, the University was conceived of as a decentralized university system, and that objective was being achieved, since three research and training centres had been established, specifically, the World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU/WIDER) at Helsinki, Finland; the Institute for New Technologies (UNU/INTECH) at Maastrict, the Netherlands; and the International Institute for Software Technology (UNU/IIST) in Macau. Two major programmes had been established, the Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU/INRA), and the Programme on Biotechnology in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNU/BIOLAC). The University was also strengthening its networks of associated and collaborating institutions, particularly in the third world, and was exploring the possibility of establishing other research and training centres and programmes in different parts of the world, particularly in the developing countries.

The University had reached an important crossroads in its institutional growth, and it was therefore necessary to establish contacts with colleagues and experts within and outside of the UNU system to take stock of the University's institutional growth since its establishment in 1975 and to

(Mr. de Souza)

assist him in the formulation, together with the University Council, of an institutional development strategy for the future. In view of that, he had convened a number of meetings since September 1990 involving current and former members of the University Council, United Nations senior officials, programme coordinators, representatives of associated institutions and networks, scholars and senior staff of the University. He had also convened the first conference of the directors of research and training centres and programmes, which had been held at Tokyo in April.

Clearly, the overall aim of the University's institutional growth should be to consolidate its scientific and scholarly competence and policy-making expertise so as to build a tradition of excellence and to serve as an authoritative reference on pressing global issues. The University's research programme must also address more effectively and comprehensively the global agenda of the United Nations and of the international community. The University's institutional development strategy must call for a clear delineation of responsibilities between the University Centre and its research and training centres and programmes. The aim was to achieve coherence in the University's mandate and academic agenda, maintain its integrity and cohesion and manage in an efficient manner a decentralized and expanding system. The University Centre performed the primary functions of strategic planning, programming and coordination for the University as a whole, while the research and training centres and programmes carried out research, advanced training and dissemination activities. The University Centre also undertook exploratory and inter-programmatic activities and responded flexibly to urgent problems as they arose. The University's fellowship and training programme, through which 1,000 fellows and over 600 other trainees had participated in advanced training programmes, was aimed at human resource development and the strengthening of institutional capabilities in the developing countries. The establishment of the University Press would enhance the University's efforts to bring its research results, as well as those of other relevant institutions, to a larger audience in academic circles, particularly in the developing countries.

(Mr. de Souza)

An important element of the University's work was to pay particular attention to the evolving needs of the United Nations system in addressing global issues of concern. The University's research work could contribute to the intellectual and scientific underpinning of some of the issues encountered in the United Nations. UNU was now in a better position than ever to fulfil that role and was strengthening its capacity to make useful contributions to the ongoing discussions within the United Nations system. Over the past few months, he had participated in the meetings of senior officials of the United Nations and some of the system's organizations, such as UNESCO, UNICEF and others. UNU was currently responding to several requests from colleagues in the United Nations system concerned with a number of key issues, such as environment and development, security and cooperation in the Gulf region and energy. He had been assisting the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation in the organization of meetings of United Nations research institutes. The second such meeting would be held at Geneva in July and would focus on the possible contribution of research institutes in the area of environment and development, particularly in the context of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in 1992. UNU and the Centre for Science and Technology for Development had made considerable progress in drawing up the basic framework for the register of research of the United Nations system, which it was hoped would become operational by mid-1992. The proposed system for the exchange of information was expected to be a catalyst for closer collaboration between the academic community and the United Nations system, as well as among United Nations organizations themselves.

In 1991, the third research and training centre, the International Institute for Software Technology (UNU/IIST) was formally established with the signing of the relevant agreements between UNU, the Government of the Portuguese Republic, the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Governor of Macau. In a short time, the members of the Institute's Board would be selected and its first Director would be appointed. Within the framework of the second medium-term perspective, the establishment in Bangkok, Thailand, of an international programme for veterinary diagnostic technology

(Mr. de Souza)

was being explored. At the forthcoming session of the University Council, he would submit the final feasibility study on the establishment of such an international programme. Activities under the Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU/INRA) had commenced in the past year, and in spring 1991 two consultative meetings had been held in Lusaka and Accra in order to identify the needs of African institutions working in those three key areas: soil and water conservation and management; indigenous African foods and useful plants and mineral resources development. In recent months, the mineral resource unit, located at the School of Mines of the University of Zambia, had also become operational. Moreover, formal consultations on the location of the headquarters of UNU/INRA in Accra, were nearing completion. It was hoped that, at its thirty-seventh session to be held in June, the University Council would approve the location of UNU/INRA in Ghana.

He wished to take up the activities being carried out within the framework of the five programme areas referred to in document E/1991/15. Referring to programme area 1, peace, culture and governance, he said that UNU had organized a conference in Sitges, near Barcelona, Spain, in April, dealing with policy issues and country experiences related to administrative decentralization and alternative rural-urban configurations. Under programme area 2, the global economy, the first meeting to discuss issues of industrial policy in Eastern and Central Europe and the Soviet Union had been held in March. Under programme area 3, global life support systems, an international conference had been held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on a sustainable environmental future for the South-East Asian Region. The conference had focussed on identifying policy options for coping with environmental issues in the region up to the year 2005. In programme area 4, science and technology, an interdisciplinary symposium on "The Impact of Chaos on Science and Society" had been organized in Tokyo in April. That symposium had been organized jointly by UNU and the University of Tokyo in an effort to evaluate the impact that the discovery of "chaotic phenomena" had had on science and on man's understanding of society. A training course on science and technology had also been held in Havana, Cuba, in March; it had been organized by UNU in cooperation with UNESCO. Referring to programme area 5, population, health

(Mr. de Souza)

and human welfare, he said that in March, UNU had organized in Seoul, Republic of Korea, a workshop on Asia-Pacific urban systems, which had led to the initiation of a comparative study of large cities in the Asia-Pacific region.

Lastly, construction of the headquarters building of UNU in Tokyo would be completed within the next year. The generosity of the Japanese Government, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the Japanese people had made the project possible. The United Nations University also wished to acknowledge the support of Member States, particularly those which had generously contributed to financing the activities of the University.

Miss SAAD (Observer for Egypt) said that it was important to highlight the fact that, although it had been in existence a mere 15 years, the United Nations University (UNU) was emerging as a major research organ of the United Nations for Member States and was playing a distinct role in the context of the new challenges arising. In fact, UNU might be considered the think tank of the Organization.

Her delegation noted with satisfaction the effort by UNU to elaborate an institutional development strategy, particularly in order to strengthen the University's institutional presence in the developing countries, in addition to the 10 research and training centres and programmes already established. The possibility of sponsoring briefings on UNU for delegates participating in the General Assembly session could be explored with a view to broadening awareness of the University's activities.

Her delegation also commended UNU for activities it had conducted in recent years in certain very important developmental areas such as population, food and natural resources, where projects had been either conducted or proposed, including mega-city research, the establishment of the regional food composition data centre for the Middle East and North Africa and the establishment of the Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (INRA). However, much still remained to be done in order to distribute activities more evenly among the different regions of the world in such areas as science and technology and global environmental issues. If that could be achieved, it would enhance the prestige and credibility of the University world wide.

Strengthened coordination of UNU activities with those of the United Nations system as a whole was recommended in order to avoid duplication of

(Miss Saad, Observer, Egypt)

efforts and enrich the various United Nations entities. Positive developments included the meeting of the Rector of UNU with senior officials in the economic and social sectors of the United Nations, organized in January by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation, and the meeting convened that same month between senior staff of UNU and UNDP in order to strengthen their cooperation in the context of the new UNDP programming cycle (1992-1997). In that respect, her delegation believed that a similar level of coordination should be established with UNITAR.

Ms. BOUMAIZA (Algeria) said that if the United Nations University (UNU) was to fulfil its mission, become a centre for the dissemination of knowledge and sponsor research for a better future for mankind, it would be necessary to implement programmes of activity aimed at narrowing scientific and technological gaps between developed and developing countries and, at the same time, promoting technological research. The University would thus contribute to the establishment of scientific and technical cooperation which would be mutually beneficial and enable it to become "an international community of scholars".

From the report submitted by the Council of the United Nations University on activities conducted in the past year, it was clear that efforts had been focused mainly on the elaboration of the second medium-term perspective for 1990-1995, so that the University would have a genuinely educational programme. Despite the obvious interest which the Council had displayed in broadening the University's scope of activities and the commendable efforts realized in order to institute an international mechanism for the exchange of scientific, technical and cultural knowledge and skills, paradoxically, certain areas of research were handicapped by a lack of openness to the world, probably owing more to a restricted form of analysis than to a deliberate decision to orient certain activities towards select subjects or regions.

For example, in the section dealing with questions of governance and conflict resolution under programme area 1, Peace, culture and governance, the activities planned were basically aimed at analysing the socio-cultural causes of internal conflicts and identity problems in developing countries. That was a biased approach, for it ignored the underlying economic conditions, at both

(Ms. Boumaiza, Algeria)

the national and international level, which were involved in most internal conflicts. While those conflicts were not caused by the deterioration of living conditions, they were aggravated by poverty, hunger and underdevelopment. Neither would the quest for theoretical solutions to internal conflicts of a socio-cultural nature be complete unless it also extended to situations of socio-cultural unrest attributable to ethnic, religious or other factors, which were also to be found in developed countries.

Another example of that biased approach was furnished by the activities carried out within the framework of programme area 2 on the global economy. In the section entitled "Money, finance and trade: reforms for world development", it would be seen that the intense activity in that area did not even make reference to the situation of developing countries. Such studies took into account neither the financial difficulties encountered by those countries, particularly with respect to debt, nor investment flows, nor the difficulties those countries experienced in attempting to sell their raw materials and commodities on the market, chiefly because of tariff barriers and the drop in the prices of those products. UNU must ensure that research and studies conducted under its auspices were universal in nature.

Her delegation acknowledged the seriousness and dedication of the Rector and UNU officials and was convinced that its suggestions would be taken into account despite the limited financial resources available. In that connection, it should be noted that the system of financing UNU, open to public and private donors and donations, and the voluntary nature of contributions should not encourage the practice of selecting topics for research and training programmes which were wholly slanted towards those regions which provided financing. Such an approach would exclude those who did not have sufficient resources to make donations to the University - indeed, those most interested in broadening their scientific and technical knowledge and cooperating in training and research activities.

Her delegation commended UNU for its tremendous efforts to improve its academic publications service. The University's activities, above all, the studies and research projects being carried out there, must be more widely disseminated. Wider dissemination of scientific and technical knowledge among

(Ms. Boumaiza, Algeria)

the public at large would help to reduce disparities in those fields between developed and developing countries. That would serve, in part, to establish relations of international cooperation designed to pave the way for the transfer of technology for development.

Mr. VAN DER HEIJDEN (Netherlands) announced that the UNU Institute for New Technologies (INTECH) established by the Council in 1988 and located at Maastricht, Netherlands, had completed its preparatory phase and had become operational at the end of 1990, when the Director of the Institute, Professor Charles Cooper, assumed his duties. The Government of the Netherlands had contributed $14.8 million to the UNU endowment fund for INTECH and would continue to make annual contributions. INTECH would also be eligible to apply for research and training funds from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Netherlands. The premises of the Institute had been made available free of charge.

The new Institute would concentrate on developing policies for the best possible application of new technologies, such as micro-electronics and biotechnology, especially in developing countries, and on reducing the undesirable side-effects of such application to a minimum. INTECH would strive primarily to determine ways of using the new technologies with a view to achieving development objectives. Economic development in developing countries would depend, among other things, on the possibility of combining new and traditional technologies, in order to promote the process of development, combining, on the one hand, industries which used micro-electronics and consequently required little labour to produce standardized high-quality products and, on the other, on the one hand, and traditional small-scale manufactures with low investment costs which created important sources of employment in various parts of the country.

Current biotechnology was generally market-oriented and the direction of biotechnological research was largely determined by the interests of enterprises. To achieve a broader balance of interests and prevent developments in the field of biotechnology from widening the gap between rich and poor countries, it was important to take into consideration the interests of developing countries. Examples of measures which could serve this purpose

(Mr. van der Heijden, Netherlands)

were intellectual property rights, at both national and international levels, regulations on the release into the environment of genetically manipulated organisms and codes of conduct governing transnational corporations not subject to national legislation.

During the previous session of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Netherlands had proposed that the local content of staff training courses should be increased so as to make the training less donor-oriented. Joint training courses were envisaged, in which the staff members of developing countries and those of donors would share the same working tools and language while at the same time local training capacities in developing countries would be strengthened. The contribution of UNU to this project would consist in assuring the intellectual feedback of research towards training. Although the proposal was still in its early stages, his delegation nevertheless wanted to seize the opportunity to draw the attention of the Economic and Social Council to it.

Mr. FLOREAN (Romania) said that his delegation was pleased that cooperation between UNU and other bodies and organizations of the United Nations system had become more systematic.

The transformation of the economic and political systems of the countries of Eastern Europe constituted one of the most historically significant challenges of the present time. Eastern European countries, including his own, were implementing radical economic, political and social reforms. The achievement of the objectives of the reforms would benefit not only those countries but the international community as a whole. The reforms, however, would succeed only if the economies of those countries were able to become effectively integrated into the world economy. The Eastern European countries were currently facing very difficult problems, given the unprecedented nature, the magnitude and the complexity of societal transition and the unfavourable external environment.

Romania was grateful to UNU, and in particular to the World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER), for including among their preoccupations the problems of the economic reforms in the Eastern European countries. The Institute was situated geographically close to Eastern Europe

(Mr. Florean, Romania)

and had good contacts with both policy-makers and leading academics of all the Eastern European countries. Romania hoped that the Institute would play a leading role in an intensified effort to solve the problems of Eastern Europe. The Institute would have the full cooperation of Romania.

Mr. SETH (India) pointed out that the five themes selected for the University's second medium-term perspective for 1990-1995 and the work of the four research and training centres were indicative of the sympathetic orientation of the work of UNU with respect to the special problems of developing countries.

His delegation was pleased to note that the report of the UNU Council emphasized collaboration between the University and the United Nations system. Greater interaction between UNU and the bodies, organs and organizations of the United Nations system should be targeted towards greater harmonization and coordination of system-wide activity.

His delegation was pleased to note that in programme area 4 (science and technology) a source book was to be published that would address questions of science and technology policy, and it looked forward to the publication of inputs into the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in 1992. It also noted with interest the large number of institutions that were to be developed in various areas, including software technology, new and renewable sources of energy, environment and health.

Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that UNU, the most important research body in the United Nations system, would play a significant part in the task of exploring the role of the Organization within a long-term perspective. UNU was the linchpin between the world academic community and the United Nations system and was expected to be the international focal point for research activities throughout the world, and to encourage programmes undertaken by institutions in developing countries, strengthen exchanges with academic institutions in developed countries and facilitate the support of donor countries to those activities.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

Japan welcomed the establishment of UNU research and training centres (RTCs) and considered that, in order to ensure the sound development of UNU, the following questions should be addressed: first, concerning the relationship between the University Centre and the RTCs, the Centre's role should be to provide programme guidance and strategic inputs; the Centre and the RTCs should reinforce and complement each other. Second, UNU should enhance its fund-raising strategies in order to strengthen its financial base. While Japan was pleased that a growing number of countries were showing a strong interest in the activities of RTCs, it was a source of concern that contributions to the Endowment Fund for general purposes had not increased significantly. It was not very healthy for Japan to remain the sole major donor country, contributing approximately 70 per cent of the Endowment Fund and 55 per cent of the total contributions to UNU, including those earmarked for RTCs. In 1990, as a result of the efforts of the Rector and his staff, approximately $US 14 million had been contributed to UNU. However, most of it had gone to RTCs and specific programmes, and only about $1.3 million had been allocated to the Endowment Fund. It was essential, therefore, that further efforts be made to bring about a substantial increase in contributions to the Endowment Fund. It might be necessary to explore the possibility of soliciting funding from the private sector. In order to do so, UNU would have to step up its efforts to increase public awareness of its activities and the results of its research. The Japanese delegation supported the view of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that UNU should strive to ensure effective utilization of its resources.

Third, the role of the UNU Council needed to be reviewed. UNU must maintain good relations with the world academic community; but it must also cultivate a closer relationship with Governments by constantly providing information on its activities. While everyone was fully aware of the importance of maintaining the academic freedom guaranteed in the Charter of the University, it was equally vital that Governments' views should be reflected in the management of the Council to ensure that UNU did not make the mistake which had been made by other organizations.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

Having recently celebrated its fifteenth anniversary, UNU was at a crossroads. As a responsible host country, Japan intended to continue to extend its support and assistance to the University, in particular through the construction of a headquarters building and the establishment of the Institute of Advanced Studies. More important than that "hardware", it was essential to provide the University with human resources and an effective management structure, to formulate long-term strategies, and to consolidate the University's financial base.

Mr. MALONE (Canada) said that the United Nations University should be commended not only for its own activities, but also for what it had done in synthesizing and acting as catalyst for many other research activities throughout the world. The University's multidisciplinary approach to research, training and information activities and in particular to its own research programme, which included not only fundamental scientific research but also the application of that research in support of the development process, was highly positive. Its interest in activities connected with environment and development, within the framework of the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in 1992, was also gratifying. He drew attention to the excellent quality of the publications of the World Institute for Development Economics Research at Helsinki.

Mr. FUJITA (Brazil) said that the United Nations University, in its 15 years of activity, had effectively asserted its vocation as a true international community of scholars engaged in research, postgraduate training and the dissemination of knowledge. His delegation wished to express its appreciation to the Japanese people and authorities for their continuing support to the University.

As one of the sponsors of General Assembly resolution 45/220, Brazil welcomed the implementation of the University's programmes of research, training and dissemination of knowledge, within the framework of its second medium-term perspective for 1990-1995. He reported in that connection that Brazilian institutions were collaborating with the University, such as the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development and the

(Mr. Fujita, Brazil)

Commission for Professional Development in Higher Education, which had concluded cost-sharing agreements with UNU whereby they defrayed the local costs of 50 UNU fellowships per year, tenable at Brazilian institutions.

As part of the UNU project on sustainable development in the humid tropics, the fourth international training course on remote-sensing technology had been organized at the Brazilian Space Research Institute, and a number of fellows from Latin American countries had participated in the course in 1990. Also, within the framework of the project on science and technology for development, several Latin American fellows had received training at the State University of Campinas (Brazil).

The University of São Paulo had become an associated institution of UNU in March 1986 and had undertaken activities in the areas of food and nutrition, biotechnology and poverty and resources policy and management and was organizing advanced training courses in such fields as ecology and management of inland waters.

Brazil welcomed the approach of UNU in carrying out its mandate within a multidisciplinary, multilateral and multicultural perspective, for that would promote an intensive and extensive exchange of experience among different peoples, broadening their access to knowledge and information, which would further scientific and technological progress, especially in developing countries. This was commendable work which deserved to be supported by the membership of the United Nations.

Mrs. FOKINA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) welcomed the attention that the United Nations was paying to urgent world problems affecting man's survival, development and well-being, in accordance with the University's second medium-term perspective for 1990-1995, within the framework of five research programme areas, namely universal human values and global responsibility, new trends in the world economy, global life support problems, progress in science and technology and the dynamics of population and human welfare. Those programmes reflected the new dynamism acquired by the United Nations following a period of confrontation, now that the growing interdependence of peoples and the priority that must be accorded to human values had been demonstrated.

(Mrs. Fokina, USSR)

Her delegation stressed the importance of the University's systematic approach to research, which took into account the factors and trends of the world economy, population and the advances of science and technology. UNU had taken the right decision in promoting the creation and development of research and training centres throughout the world; had done important work in the diffusion of the advances of science and technology and studied certain fundamental economic questions, such as the application of basic research to concrete problems and the training of specialists and scientists; had set up a valuable programme for establishing bonds between autonomous scientific institutions, individual experts and specialists and United Nations agencies; and had carried out an important task of coordination on specific topics, such as new and renewable sources of energy.

The effectiveness of the United Nations University would be greater if it contributed to the preparation of the United Nations programmes on the environment, in particular the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in 1992. Another research theme that might be added to the second medium-term perspective for 1990-1995 would be a study of trends and problems in the conversion of military production and specifically the preparation of studies on international cooperation in that sphere.

Her delegation welcomed the interest of Soviet scientific organizations in collaborating with the United Nations University and promoting contacts with scientists and specialists in developing countries. That aspect would be given a new impetus by the visit of Mr. de Souza to the Soviet Union, and it was to be hoped that the future would bring the development of new forms of cooperation.

Mr. DONG Jianlong (China) said that despite the shortfall of funds, the United Nations University had made progress in the five programme areas established in the second medium-term perspective for 1990-1995, especially in respect of the global economy. His delegation was especially appreciative of the research work done under the project "Hunger and poverty - the poorest billion", which, it felt, dealt with one of mankind's most pressing problems. Research and efforts to find solutions to that problem should be strengthened,

(Mr. Dong Jianlong, China)

for the eradication of poverty would not only lead to economic development but would also have a direct impact on the maintenance of world peace and security. His delegation was pleased to note that UNU had also made headway in the establishment of research and training centres and in that connection announced that in March 1991 China, Portugal, Macao and the United Nations University had signed an agreement on the establishment of an International Research Institute of Software Technology thanks to contributions by the parties concerned. It was regrettable, however, that some proposals for improving the University's work had failed to elicit feedback from UNU, which should respond to such proposals at an appropriate time and in an appropriate manner.

It had been 17 years since the founding of UNU, and China wished to make a number of proposals to improve its work. First, it proposed that the Council of UNU should meet once a year instead of twice a year; while definite progress had been achieved by the University in streamlining its structure and making its work more efficient, such a measure would not only result in economy, but also make it possible to take fuller advantage of the staff in the activities of substantive programmes. Second, the developed countries should be encouraged to establish operational units in developing countries, as a way of enhancing their national capacities. Third, UNU should strengthen its cooperation and coordination with agencies within the United Nations system, such as UNDP, as well as with non-governmental organizations, for the efficiency of the University's work would surely be improved by attracting and utilizing the funds of such agencies and putting its full research capacities to work. Lastly, with regard to the management of the University's Endowment Fund, an independently managed investment portfolio should be created as soon as possible as a means of increasing the Fund's interest income.

Mr. MFULA (Zambia) said that his Government was interested in the research, training and dissemination activities of the United Nations University, which had contributed to the solution of various global problems. His delegation was happy to note that UNU would contribute to global activities relating to environment and development.

(Mr. Mfula, Zambia)

His delegation was pleased to observe that UNU was continuing to take practical steps to begin the implementation of the programme for natural resources in Africa. The natural resources base in Africa was at a critical juncture: some countries in the region faced rapid resource depletion that threatened to unleash an environmental calamity, while at the same time, the international system of production had shifted from intensive use of raw materials to knowledge-intensive production techniques heavily reliant on synthetic substitutes, so that it was no longer possible for Africa to sustain economic growth on the basis of cheap currencies, low labour costs, and, above all, abundant natural resources.

Against that background, a new strategy of management and rehabilitation of Africa's natural resources was needed, and the programme for natural resources in Africa would thus complement national and subregional efforts to increase the productivity of the African economy and regenerate prosperity. His delegation was grateful to all donors who had pledged resources for the initiation of the programme, and Zambia, as host to the mineral resources unit of the Institute for Natural Resources in Africa, had committed itself to full realization of the unit's potential.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA

Mr. HASHIM (Special Coordinator for Emergency Relief Operations in Somalia) recalled that in his statement of the previous year to the Economic and Social Council the main focus had been on the extraordinary interim emergency programme, which had ended on 31 August 1990. Within the framework of the programme, approximately 7,000 tons of food as well as non-food aid had been provided to 140,000 refugees and vulnerable groups in north-western Somalia. Due to logistical problems, the amount of food delivered had been slightly more than half the planned 2,800 tons per month. Thus the impact of that special relief programme had been uneven.

At that point, the international community of donors, including the United Nations and its agencies, had expressed concern over the plight of the refugees and begun to explore alternative measures for continuing humanitarian assistance. However, while consultations were in progress, the security

(Mr. Hashim)

situation had begun to deteriorate rapidly, especially in the last quarter of 1990. By early December 1990, security conditions had worsened to such an extent that United Nations headquarters had ordered the evacuation of all dependants of staff members and non-essential staff from Somalia. By the middle of January 1991, all foreign diplomatic missions and international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, had been evacuated from Mogadishu.

The year before, concerns had centred on the search for solutions to problems affecting one particular region of Somalia - the north - whereas, in its latest phase, a human crisis of tragic proportions, which had engulfed the entire country, must be addressed. Mogadishu, which, since the summer of 1988, had served as a safe haven for hundreds of thousands of citizens who had been forced to flee their homes in various parts of the country, had become the main battleground, where ferocious fighting had erupted on 30 December 1990 between government forces and opposition groups. The battle had lasted four weeks, ending with the overthrow of the Government. In the meantime, hundreds of thousands of the city's residents had had to flee for safety to other towns and villages, mostly to the south of the country and along the coast. Eventually, the fighting had extended to those towns as well, and thousands of people once again had had to flee. Currently, many Somalians were displaced along the border with Kenya. Some had crossed the border - over land or aboard various rather unreliable small ships heading for Mombassa and other Kenyan ports. Some of the ships had never reached their destination. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had registered over 20,000 Somali refugees in Kenya. More than 100,000 remained within the border area. That pattern had been repeated in several locations in the country. Fighting and inter-clan tensions had forced people practically everywhere to abandon their homes and head for other areas. It was currently estimated that at least one third of all Somalis - i.e., 2.2 million people - had become displaced.

Instead of returning to their various headquarters following evacuation, the representatives of the United Nations agencies had remained near Somalia, in Nairobi, Kenya. They had formed a United Nations task force to monitor and

(Mr. Hashim)

report on developments in Somalia, and coordinate efforts and assistance. A one-day visit on 20 February had enabled the group to make a preliminary assessment of the security situation, hold informal discussions with the authorities and meet with the local staff which had remained in the country. During a meeting with the interim President, he had appealed to the United Nations, as well as non-governmental organizations and bilateral donors to lend assistance urgently to Somalia by providing food, medical supplies, water, fuel and transportation equipment.

On returning from its visit, the task force had submitted its report to Headquarters. In Nairobi, the task force had briefed representatives of international donors and entered into consultations with donors generally. The task force had maintained contact with non-governmental organizations operating in the area, and with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The response of the donor community had been meaningful; although not sizeable enough to cover a significant part of the massive needs. Assistance, from official donors both bilateral and multilateral, had been mostly in the form of food and medical supplies. Some bilateral donors had contributed sizeable quantities of fuel, especially the Persian Gulf countries and other countries such as Italy, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt and others. A number of voluntary non-governmental organizations had provided assistance in the form of special services, especially in the areas of medical care, sanitation and water supply. They had provided the human factor by dispatching a few specialists and skilled technicians who worked directly with the affected people. The International Committee of the Red Cross had continued to offer assistance in all the areas mentioned, as did the European community. The United Nations agencies had offered humanitarian assistance directly and also by supporting non-governmental organizations.

The needs of Somalia during the current crisis were enormous and, therefore, a much greater flow of assistance must be mobilized. The needs of certain communities which had become displaced in isolated, distant regions or had been caught inside active conflict zones were yet to be ascertained. However, they could be assumed to be similar in nature and large in scale.

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During the month of April, he had participated in a number of high-level meetings with senior officials of the United Nations in New York in order to review the situation of Somalia. Following an April meeting in Paris with the Executive Heads of the United Nations agencies, the Secretary-General had decided to re-establish a United Nations presence in the country as early as circumstances would permit. That was to be determined by a high-level security assessment mission to all regions of the country. That mission had visited Somalia from 7 to 11 May 1991, and its report, which contained conclusions and recommendations, had been submitted to the Office of the Secretary-General for consideration. The mission had spent five days in Somalia and had travelled to the northern, central and southern parts of the country. It had visited seven major towns, including the capital city, Mogadishu. Essentially, the mission's findings had confirmed the traumatic and appalling state of affairs in the country.

Four months after the flare-up of hostilities in Mogadishu, Somalia's problems were far from over. The recent visit by the mission had afforded an opportunity to gather some first-hand impressions of the prevailing situation and how the authorities controlling the various regions were coping with the problems of security, war injuries, food shortages, epidemics, lack of shelter and basic services. The plight of the most vulnerable groups, such as children and women, the internally displaced and destitute returnees to Somalia continued to require the most urgent attention.

The path to a peaceful resolution of Somalia's political problems was likely to be difficult. And yet, however long it might take to resolve the issues involved, the indisputable fact was that all Somalia needed an enormous amount of humanitarian assistance immediately. Furthermore, such relief support was needed urgently if major human catastrophes were to be averted. In the north, the most pressing needs were food, mine clearance in Hargeisa and surrounding areas; shelter, especially for the returnees; the reactivation of sanitation and other basic health services; the restoration of the water supply; veterinary services; and quick-maturing sorghum seeds, which were needed urgently. In the centre of the country, priorities were food, fuel and

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communication equipment in order to establish a basic infrastructure, including health, water supply and electricity. However, everywhere, including the dense population centres such as the town of Baidoa, the injured, the starving and the unsheltered, the majority of whom were children and women, required urgent attention. The same was true in the south, where the town of Kismayo was virtually a garrison town teeming with the displaced and destitute, and practically drowned in stagnant, smelly and filthy sewer puddles which had covered almost all thoroughfares.

The current food needs of Somalia were so overriding that they deserved special attention. Low food production in 1990 and the first half of 1991 and the drastic reduction in commercial imports since the outbreak of fighting for control of the capital had led to a very serious shortage of food. Malnutrition among the vulnerable groups, especially among pre-school children and expectant and nursing mothers, the aged and the sick, was reported to be high and on the increase. Even the seeds required for the next crop, which was to be sown in August and September and harvested in December, had been consumed. Consequently, the country would have no crop or a very small crop during the whole of 1991. If nothing was done in that respect, the current situation of widespread shortages and malnutrition would worsen, and the obvious consequences would be hunger and death from starvation.

When United Nations personnel were evacuated from Somalia on 2 January 1991, the World Food Programme (WFP) had had stocks of about 40,000 metric tons of food in Mogadishu intended for refugees and a small portion for urban vulnerable groups. All of those reserves had been looted by the troops. During the visit by the mission, the representative of the interim Government had requested food assistance from the United Nations system totalling 306,000 tons (86,000 tons of rice, 92,000 tons of wheat and wheat flour, 52,000 tons of edible oil and 76,000 tons of sugar). The number of persons for whom the food was intended had not been indicated, but, according to government sources, between 40 and 50 per cent of the country's estimated population of 7 million was in need of emergency food aid. The logistics of transporting and distributing large quantities of food under

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conditions of insecurity prevailing in the country would be a truly Herculean task, requiring fleets of trucks and fuel, and an infrastructure to manage and operate a programme of assistance of that magnitude.

The United Nations system had recently purchased 1,800 tons of rice which would be sent in June to the different parts of the country for distribution to vulnerable groups by the few non-governmental organizations still operating in Somalia. WFP was also arranging for the shipment of an additional 16,940 tons of food which were expected to arrive in June or July. However, substantial additional reserves would be required and to that end, donors would have to be contacted and requested to make the necessary contributions. It was essential that such assistance should be made available as a matter of extreme urgency.

With regard to the situation of refugees and displaced persons in Somalia, he explained that, prior to the evacuation of United Nations staff from Mogadishu, the United Nations system had been assisting approximately 450,000 Ethiopian refugees in the southern part of Somalia. Of those refugees, 100,000 had opted for repatriation to Ethiopia, and the rest for local integration in Somalia. In addition, about 50,000 refugees were registered in the north for repatriation to Ethiopia. There was no reliable information as to what had happened to those refugees. However, it was believed that around 90 per cent of the refugees in the south and almost 100 per cent of those in the north had fled from Somalia and made their way mostly to Ethiopia, their country of origin. The small numbers that remained in Somalia seemed to be mostly in Mogadishu and Qorioley and needed to be assisted along with other thousands of people who had been displaced. Some 370,000 Somali refugees who had fled from the conflict in the north-western part of Somalia in the summer of 1988 had registered in refugee camps in Ethiopia and had been receiving assistance from UNHCR and WFP. It was reported that quite a number of those refugees had started to return to their homes, under conditions of ruin, devastation and the danger of land mines. There was an urgent need for a well-organized programme to assist in the repatriation and rehabilitation of those refugees. That would be a much more

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preferable and cost-effective approach than assisting them as refugees in the desolate camps in the harsh terrains of eastern Ethiopia.

Whereas Somalia's relief and rehabilitation needs could only be determined by a United Nations inter-agency mission, to be fielded as soon as possible, the most desperately needed assistance must be mobilized and rushed without delay. Accordingly, the Secretary-General had considered the possibility of a United Nations presence, in however measured form, to assist in handling humanitarian assistance. The relief assistance would comprise food, fuel, medicines and shelter materials. The challenge now for the United Nations and its agencies was to utilize the necessary services and manpower to give effective assistance to Somalia. It was also for all donors and non-governmental organizations to pledge and to make available additional resources. It was incumbent on all to act with dispatch and with forcefulness to respond to Somalia's plight and to address the so-called "quiet catastrophe".

Mr. TRAXLER (Italy) said that, in the light of the internal political situation characterized by great uncertainty and serious tensions existing in Somalia, Italy strongly believed that large-scale humanitarian assistance by the international community could mitigate the violence and suffering in that country. The shipment of large amounts of foodstuffs, medicines and technical personnel, such as doctors and nurses, could not only relieve the plight of the population but might also constitute a factor of peace. The Government of Italy therefore fervently hoped that the United Nations specialized agencies would accord due attention to the problem and contribute to the establishment of a wide-reaching programme of humanitarian assistance to Somalia. Italy was in complete agreement with the report of the Special Coordinator and welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to re-establish the United Nations presence in Somalia. Italy had also urged friendly and allied countries, as well as the Commission of the European Community, to provide emergency assistance with the goal of containing violence and reducing tension.

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

While it was true that the security situation in the country was far from satisfactory, the fact that relief assistance personnel from non-governmental organizations were already working in Mogadishu and other Somali cities indicated the existence of minimum security conditions that would permit the dispatch of technical staff by other countries and by international institutions.

Meanwhile, Italy had stepped up its emergency assistance to Somalia. It had recently purchased 116 tons of foodstuffs, medicine and fuel in Nairobi that were shortly to be channelled to Somalia and was organizing relief shipments by sea, whereas until now all the shipments had had to be sent by air. Furthermore, large amounts of medicines had been purchased in Italy, of which 9.6 tons had been shipped to Somalia using Italian military planes, while the remaining 15.8 tons would be forwarded very soon by sea. Italy was also sending medical and other support staff to Somalia in order to set up an emergency health unit. More recently, the Italian Government had authorized the purchase of relief supplies in countries of the area to be sent to Somalia. In addition, another nine shipments of 270 tons each of foodstuffs and medicines were to be dispatched.

Italy continued to intensify its diplomatic efforts to urge all the parties to the conflict to exercise self-restraint so as to create a climate conducive to national reconciliation. While supporting any initiative directed at political coordination between the parties, with a view to reaching a dialogue, Italy hoped that the peace conference for Somalia, to be held, in principle, in Cairo, on 8 July, would see the participation of all the political and social components of the Somali society and set in motion a process of pacification and national reconciliation.

Mr. OSMAN (Somalia) expressed appreciation to the Special Coordinator for his statement, which was the first report submitted by a United Nations mission to a principal organ of the Organization since the beginning of the civil conflict in Somalia. He also expressed his deep appreciation to the representative of Italy for his solidarity with the people of Somalia in those difficult times.

Mr. MacARTHUR (United States of America) said that his country felt great concern at the situation of permanent instability existing in Somalia. The United States was thinking of providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Somalia as soon as the situation of the country allowed it. The United States had 12,000 tons of emergency food aid on the high seas that could be speedily disembarked in Somalia. Furthermore, if conditions allowed, it would establish a supplementary food programme for the population of Somalia, as well as a veterinary assistance programme to save the livestock sector. The United States was also prepared to collaborate in mine-clearing operations in Somalia.

He hoped that an end would be put to the instability prevailing in the country, so that humanitarian efforts could be put into play and urgent assistance could be given to those most in need.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (E/1991/39)

Mr. KOZYREL (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the elimination of racism and racial discrimination was a fundamental activity of the United Nations. Those scourges were a constant danger to international peace and security. In spite of the efforts of the international community to put an end to them, racism and racial discrimination continued to exist and represented a threat to the peoples of the world. International condemnation of those phenomena continued to be necessary, and Governments should combat the discriminatory practices still existing in their countries.

In many parts of the world, national reassertion movements were appearing. That was not intrinsically negative, since peoples had a right to recover their own traditions and seek their roots and their aspirations were natural and legitimate. The important thing was that such national rebirth should be carried out in a civilized manner and not lead to isolationism, xenophobia or the violation of human rights. Those movements must not be allowed to result in the emergence of racist phenomena. Nations should become highly sensitized to the emergence of new signs of racism and xenophobia. It was of fundamental importance that the rights and freedoms of all persons, irrespective of race, language or religion, should be strictly respected. It

(Mr. Kozyrel, USSR)

must be ensured that that respect naturally formed a part of the consciousness and behaviour of every individual.

The United Nations accorded considerable importance to the promotion of cooperation and coordination with the various organs and agencies of the system in combating racism and racial discrimination. He agreed with the Coordinator for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination that the problems of racism and racial discrimination affected all sectors of the United Nations system. He considered it positive that the United Nations was concentrating its efforts in two main directions: the combating of new forms of racism, such as that suffered by migrant workers or persons who were not citizens of the country in which they resided; and the implementation of an educational campaign designed to promote racial harmony and tolerance. In that regard, he commended the work carried out by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Subcommittee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. He unreservedly supported the idea of holding, in August, a joint meeting of the Committee and the Subcommission for an exchange of opinions in connection with the combating of racism and racial discrimination. It was necessary to begin now to prepare for the third decade to combat racism and racial discrimination, which would begin in 1993.

It should be recognized that, in South Africa, some progress was being made. That was the result of many years of efforts by the international community to eliminate apartheid. The dialogue initiated between the Government of South Africa and the representatives of the majority of that country's population should be encouraged. On the other hand, the episodes of violence that had occurred in South Africa showed that the dismantling of the system of apartheid was still not an irreversible process. The disappearance of apartheid should not only be achieved on the legislative and governmental plane but on the economic and educational plane also. Furthermore, the South African electoral system should be radically changed. In order to achieve all those objectives, it was essential to continue pressures on the South African Government until the total elimination of apartheid was achieved.

Mr. SHAHEED (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the United Nations was founded after the Second World War in order to construct a new international order based on the equality of all nations and of all human beings, as expressed in the preamble of the Charter. The question of racism and racial discrimination had been a major focus of attention throughout the history of the United Nations; the two phenomena were unacceptable scourges, constituting as they did a violation of the fundamental human rights set forth in the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as in other basic instruments of the United Nations. Violations of those rights in South Africa demonstrated the extent of the injustice which could result from measures of racism and racial discrimination. Those measures had caused the deaths of many South Africans, while others had been imprisoned, often without trial, or forced into exile.

It was not easy to assess the harm done to families dispersed as a result of the implementation of laws on racial classification, nor the damage caused to the education system, leaving the indigenous populations unschooled. The Pretoria regime had devised those political measures in order to ensure that the crisis affected the whole population and to divert their struggle away from its true objectives. The regime and its police attempted to support one sector with a view to dividing the population; death squads had also been set up, which unleashed violence and then blamed the population for such manifestations of violence.

The United Nations had on many occasions condemned the policies of racism and racial discrimination practised by the Pretoria regime, which violated the principles of the Charter, internationally recognized human rights and all pertinent international conventions. However, the racist regime remained in place and had stepped up its repression. The international community should continue to support the legitimate struggle of the South African people and to strengthen sanctions against the Pretoria regime. The time was not yet ripe to lift any of the sanctions imposed under the pertinent United Nations resolutions: it would indeed be quite wrong to do so now that the South African people was on its way to achieving a real victory. The doctrine of

(Mr. Shaheed, Syrian Arab Republic)

racism could not be reformed; it had to be completely eradicated. It would be counterproductive to lift sanctions at the present time.

The official declarations of the Pretoria regime did not match the country's real situation. The South African authorities were maintaining their repressive practices, and there was still a large number of political prisoners in the country's prisons. The same was true of the Palestinian people, which had been deprived of its rights in the territories occupied by Israel. Meanwhile, Israel continued to collaborate with the Pretoria regime, supplying it with weapons of mass destruction. The struggle of the Palestinian and South African peoples against racism and discrimination should be supported and the cooperation between the Pretoria regime and the Israeli authorities condemned, particularly with respect to military and nuclear affairs. By virtue of Israel's shameful collaboration with Pretoria, the South African authorities now possessed intermediate-range Jericho strategic missiles. The United Nations had repeatedly condemned such collaboration, most recently in General Assembly resolution 45/176.

His country had given practical expression to the Programme of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and urged the United Nations and all its Member States to make more determined efforts to attain the Decade's objectives. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination must be provided with sufficient financial resources from the United Nations regular budget in order to continue performing its functions. His country also urged the General Assembly to proclaim a Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination in 1993 and hoped that that would be the last time it would prove necessary to proclaim a decade to eliminate racism.

Mr. SIGURDSSON (Iceland), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), recalled that those countries had repeatedly condemned all forms of discrimination based on race, colour or ethnic or national origin, had adopted firm administrative and legislative measures to combat discrimination and were currently taking action in the education sector. Although the Second Decade had helped to increase

(Mr. Sigurdsson, Iceland)

even further public awareness of the evils of racism, the principal objectives of the first two Decades had not been achieved and, in many parts of the world, there were increasing signs of racism and racial discrimination. The international community must respond to that situation and consider ways of fighting new trends involving racism, discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia.

All societies were responsible for informing and educating their citizens and for providing legal protection to the victims of racial prejudices and racial attitudes; the hidden and subconscious elements of racism must continue to be explored and that knowledge be brought into education systems.

The Commission on Human Rights had recommended, in its resolution 1991/11, that the General Assembly should take steps to proclaim a Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, to begin in 1993. If the Decade were to be proclaimed, it must be adequately financed.

The new positive era in international relations should help to eliminate racism and racial discrimination in all its forms. The Nordic countries had always insisted on the need to put an end to the system of apartheid by peaceful means. The Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, which was adopted at the sixteenth special session of the General Assembly, and General Assembly resolution 45/176 A, both of which were adopted by consensus, had given substantial impetus to efforts to eradicate apartheid. The South African Government, for its part, was taking positive steps to abolish the laws on which apartheid was based. Thus, the South African Parliament had been asked to repeal the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936, the Group Areas Act of 1966 and the Black Communities Development Act of 1984. The Nordic countries welcomed that positive development and hoped that all the parties concerned in South Africa would contribute to the process of peaceful change and to the cessation of acts of violence. In a joint communiqué issued at their meeting in Sweden in March 1991, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Nordic countries stated that the economic sanctions applied by those countries against South Africa should be re-examined and could be revoked if the legislative pillars of the apartheid system were abolished.

(Mr. Sigurdsson, Iceland)

The Committee appointed to monitor compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination faced economic difficulties because many States parties were not meeting their financial obligations. That attitude could be interpreted as a lack of political commitment by those States to the Convention. In that connection, the adoption of Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1990/25 and 1991/20, which proposed the establishment of a contingency reserve fund and temporary allocations of necessary funds by way of advances out of the regular budget of the United Nations, should be welcomed. Nevertheless, until such time as the work of the Committee could be incorporated into the regular budget of the United Nations, the States parties must assume their responsibilities in that connection and also comply with their obligation to submit timely reports.

Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia) said that the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrined the principle of equality and asserted the commitment of the international community to secure respect for the dignity of all mankind. It was in that context that the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination was proclaimed in December 1983 and that the corresponding Programme of Action had been established. The Secretary-General's report on implementation of the Programme showed that various aspects had not as yet been put into practice and that additional action needed to be taken in order fully to attain the objectives of the Decade. The eradication of racism and racial discrimination was a priority objective for the international community and should therefore be assured the necessary resources.

His country welcomed the initiative taken by the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-seventh session in calling for increased and intensified activities to combat racism, racial discrimination and apartheid and to provide relief to its victims. It also particularly welcomed the recommendation to launch a Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination in 1993. Such a measure would be justified not only in order to sustain the accomplishments attained in the first two Decades but also in order to correct inadequacies and errors. Preparations for the World

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

Conference on Human Rights, to be held in 1993, would also establish an appropriate climate for such a proclamation.

His delegation wished to express its satisfaction with the measures taken by the Coordinator for the Second Decade, particularly with regard to his maintenance of high-level contacts between agencies of the United Nations system in order to coordinate their activities. The convening of inter-agency consultations reflected the commitment of the Coordinator and of the entire system to realizing the Decade's goals.

One of the international community's foremost concerns had been and remained to eliminate the discrimination institutionalized in South Africa under the apartheid system. His delegation appreciated the positive measures adopted by the Government and believed that the African National Congress had made progress in the search for a negotiated solution of the conflict. Nevertheless, apartheid continued to exist and there was no evidence of profound and irreversible changes. Caution should be exercised against celebrating the demise of apartheid until its last breath was spent. The United Nations and the international community should maintain the sanctions in place and continue to exert pressure on the regime, without prematurely relaxing its vigilance, as the only way of promoting a peaceful settlement. Once again, his country reiterated its support for anti-apartheid forces and their just cause.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.